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Australian Garden HISTORY

Royal Botanic Gardens
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LIBRARY

AGHS – promoting awareness and conservation of significant gardens and cultural landscapes

Editorial

Christine Hay, 2021 Sydney conference convenor

Cover photos from inaugural AGHS photo competition

1. **Lawn and grass grow side by side in the New Zealand Memorial Anzac Parade, Canberra, summer 2020**, image Anna Howe, runner up The Lawn category
2. **The Lawn Ranger comes to Granny's rescue!** image Maggie McCredie, overall winner
3. **Cacti Rock! Karratha, Western Australia, mid-winter 2021**, image Nancy Clarke, runner up Still Life category
4. **Clive in the Garden, winter 2020**, image Meg Probyn, runner up Gardener under COVID-19 (Probyn was also runner up in the Garden or Cultural Landscape category, with her image **Campaign to protect an avenue of *Quercus palustris* and a row of heritage camellias, Station Street, Bowral, NSW, winter 2020**)
5. **This gardener is all I aspire to be!** image, Neva Kastelic, winner Gardener under COVID-19 and overall runner up
6. **View from the perimeter of Mt Lofty House, during a heavy mid-winter fog event, Adelaide Hills, winter 2020**, image Susan Belperio, runner up in Garden History Imagined category
7. **A sequoia root lying on the still-charred ground under a surviving sequoia redwood tree, Mt Lofty, Adelaide Hills**, image Susan Belperio, South Australia, winter 2020, winner of Still Life category

I am delighted to be introducing the January 2022 issue by reflecting on the **Many Dreams // One Landscape** conference, eventually held in September 2021. Although months have passed, I'm still feeling the glow and sense of connection that only comes from meeting up with friends, and making new ones, at an annual AGHS national conference, even if, in a pandemic year, this had to take place in cyberspace.

Sitting at the everchanging conference coalface, it was astonishing to witness the adaptability and depth of support offered by the Society, under extreme and trying circumstances, and to march forth with the indefatigable planning committee to what became the inaugural virtual annual national conference. Many across the breadth of our membership contributed to its success. Thank you to everyone who gave so much of their time.

What comes forward from such events? My take-away was a deeper understanding of Sydney's landscape as legible layers. Following a timeline, each thought-provoking presentation brought to life the many facets of understanding this landscape: its distinctive patterns, and the ideas and people who shaped them. The inspiring program of lectures addressed the deep time occupation, connection and identity of Aboriginal people to contemporary Sydney; British agricultural and horticultural legacies; parkland expressions of Federation; the awakening of Sydney's early 20th-century conservation movement; and how modern concepts of the 1960s and 1970s influenced our methods of bush gardening, landscape design and regional planning. The virtual visit to Wendy's Secret Garden and the changing use of Sydney Harbour through an appreciation of artwork were delightful. So much rich information to think about! Helpfully, the lectures will be available on the AGHS website and two papers from the conference appear in this issue. One by Grace Karskens; the other by Janine Kitson.

The production of the virtual conference involved much behind-the-scenes planning, filming and finessing. We are indebted to the Huddle Agency for their dedication to providing a professional product, and for guiding the committee and speakers through a nerve-racking but ultimately satisfying virtual event. Through a lively online chat, delegates interacted by exchanging comments and asking questions during presentations, the wrap up and the forum. Delegates felt comfortable expressing their views this way and appeared to have fun doing so. It was a surprise to all how enjoyable it was.

In keeping with the Society's aims, the conference lectures addressed new research in landscape heritage, while heightening awareness of significant landscapes. It also looked to current global climate issues and how we as gardeners, designers and appreciators of all things landscape can adjust our approaches to make a difference and tread lightly by minimising our impacts on the earth.

Another focus was the Society's 40th anniversary, commemorated by listening to the voices of people associated with the genesis and development of the AGHS. The oral history presentation brought home the resilience and versatility of the Society. The Sydney 2021 virtual conference and the two years lead-up to it certainly proved that the Society can succeed under difficult circumstances and has a strong future.

I have many fond memories of the 2021 Sydney conference: the opening song 'Wiyathul' (Longing For Place) by Gurrumul Yunupingu, the illuminating wrap-up session, and a sense of fulfilment, once the event was done, that we had presented Sydney – its people, fabric and places – as one significant landscape.

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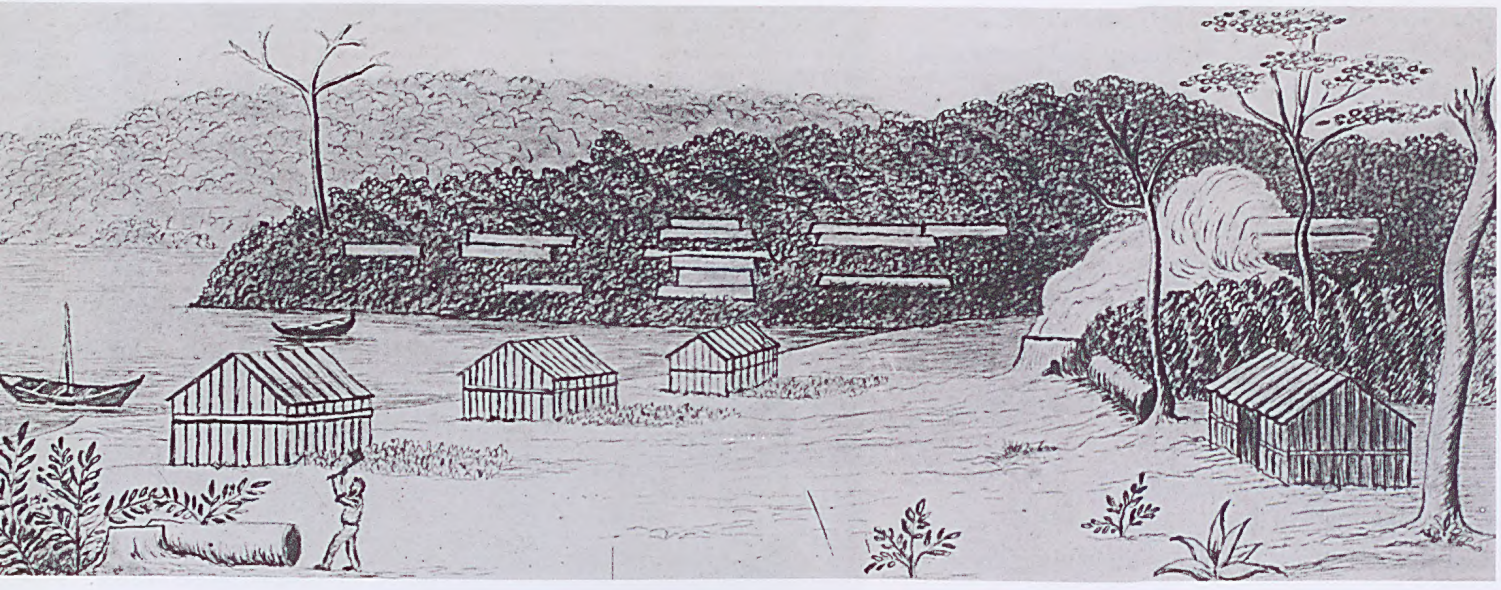
A small group of Northern NSW members met to enjoy watching the 2021 AGM together and then went on to celebrate becoming a separate branch (see page 34), photo Cherene Spendalove



Huts built for Bungaree and his family at Gurrajin, 1820 Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

The intricate mosaic of food, medicinal and other useful plants, the cleared places for camping, planting and digging yams, launching canoes, and holding corroborees; the high sacred places along the songlines that criss-crossed Country; the strictly observed boundaries that marked out the lands of each clan and Language group. This was a deeply human landscape in which nature and culture were indivisible.

Garden and Country: nourishing terrain

The ways that Aboriginal people used, shaped and managed the Australian continent have been an intense area of research and debate over the past 50 years, especially the impacts of Aboriginal fire regimes. Perhaps best known in recent years is Bill Gammage's book *The Biggest Estate on Earth*. Turning the language of empire back on itself, Gammage uses words like 'gardens', 'farms', 'estates' and 'parks' to describe an entire continent tamed and made 'beautiful and useful' by Aboriginal fire. Then Bruce Pascoe's bombshell book *Dark Emu* insisted that Aboriginal people were not hunters and gatherers at all, but farmers, sowing, reaping and grinding grain, and living in large permanent villages.

But I want to highlight some of the earlier research on Aboriginal women's food cultivation – after all, in many areas, women are the main food providers for their families. Researchers including ecobotanist Beth Gott and archaeologists Sylvia Hallam and Lesley Head showed how important yams are as staple foods for Aboriginal people across Australia, especially in the coastal areas. They wrote about yam cultivation and harvesting, the way that women replanted some parts of the yams to ensure the next harvest and took away other parts to replant near camps. ('Yam' tends to be the generic word for all plants with edible, carbohydrate-rich parts that grow underground: tubers, rhizomes, corms and bulbs.)

Women's yam harvesting altered ecologies and landscapes because their digging constantly turned over and aerated the soils. They also harvested edible water plants including cumbungi, marsh club rush and water ribbon, thinning out the wetlands, making room for younger plants. So these landscapes were and are constantly, deliberately held in balance – rather like gardening! The women used fire to burn off the cumbungi and to keep parts of forests in a perpetual state of fire recovery, so that bracken fern and other food-bearing plants had enough light.

What about the Sydney region? We know that yams were important foods in this area too, especially the rhizomes of bracken fern, which have higher carbohydrate content than potatoes. Governor Hunter saw people gathering 'a kind of root in the woods', and he thought the bush was burned to make it easier for women to get at those nourishing roots –cultural fire wasn't just about men and hunting!

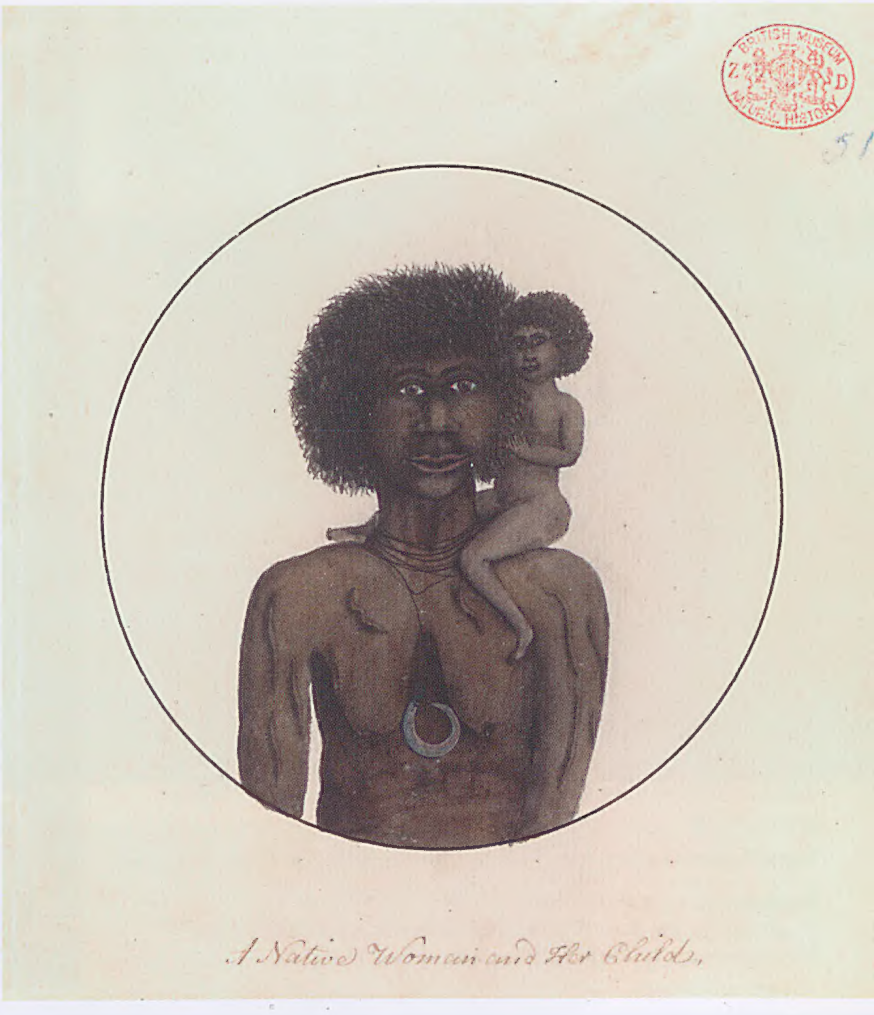
Inland from Sydney, Aboriginal women dug for yams on the river flats and lagoon edges; in the forests they harvested long yams, *Dioscorea transversa*. They thrust their strong, wooden *ganayi*, their yamsticks, into the earth, shaking it to reveal the yams. Back at camp, yams and fruits were pounded into pastes using heavy, rounded grindstones.

Sylvia Hallam wrote that Perth's Aboriginal women were 'tied' to their reliable, sustaining yam patches, while the men were more mobile. Researchers including R A Hyndes and A K Chase,

and David Trigger, have discovered that useful exotic plants (for example mango, pawpaw, sweet potato, taro, cashew, chilli pepper, cumquat, buffel grass, kapok bush and date palm) were absorbed into Indigenous worlds. One Arnhem Land group established ownership rights over the watermelons that had 'grown upon an old camp site'.

It's fascinating to think that this may also have been true of yam and fruit culture on the east coast, around Sydney. Was Country here similarly gendered, with women the owners and maintainers of their yam patches? Did particular clans or bands claim as their own the thickets of peach trees that flourished alongside the creeks in the post-contact years?

Lesley Head worked with Aboriginal women in northern Australia for many years and what she saw and learned from them led her to radically rethink the underlying concepts of 'hunter-gatherer landscape' versus 'garden'. She concluded that the two have so much in common that the differences dissolved. So if Country and garden are conceptually indistinguishable, if Aboriginal women's cultivation and harvesting especially is much like 'gardening', then the traditional Western binary of 'garden' and 'wilderness' collapses, and with it the justification for dispossession.



Above Eora woman wearing carejun, fishing line, and burra, shell fish hook around her neck, Watling Collection, Natural History Museum

Right Rockshelter converted to a grotto, a silent reminder of a lost garden and lost Country at Gurrajin, photo Grace Karskens

Top Grindstone from collection of Hawkesbury Regional Museum, photo Joy Lai

Right Tuber from long yam, *Dioscorea transversa*, photo Owen Bridgeman

Bottom Darug women Leanne Watson, Erin Wilkins and Rhiannon Wright (with Lyra Walsh) with yam sticks and paddle from Hawkesbury Regional Museum, photo Joy Lai

Nourishing terrrain: Dyarubbin, the Hawkesbury River at Durumbuluwa, Sackville. Women's yam beds were located on the riverflats here. Darug and Darkinjung people were dispossessed by white farmers, who grew wheat and corn in the same alluvial soil, photo by Joy Lai

There was no wilderness. This was a peopled, cultivated Country. So the greater question is this: can the colonising role of European gardens finally be acknowledged and called out? Can the common ground between gardens and Country, both beloved places of nourishment, beauty and delight, be brought to bear in the national project of truth telling?

Anthropologist Deborah Rose used the words 'nourishing terrains' for Aboriginal Country. Just like gardens, the nourishing can be physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. 'Nourishing terrains' also avoids the uneasy inference that Aboriginal people must somehow 'measure up' to European words, concepts and yardsticks. Why must fire regimes be 'firestick farming'? Why must grain or yam harvesters be 'farmers'?

We need new concepts and words to describe and understand how Aboriginal people have lived on this land, attuned to the great variety of ecosystems across the continent. Then we can explore questions like: how do people care for Country? How does Country respond? How do people manage to find ways to live well, and yet conserve Country? And what does Country *need*? Given the urgencies of global warming, ongoing environmental degradation and the great quest for *Makarrata*, national reconciliation with Aboriginal people, this seems like a very good time to go back to the garden, to take stock, to watch, listen and learn.

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Grace Karskens is Emeritus Professor of Australian history at the University of New South Wales. Her books include *The Colony: A History of Early Sydney* and *People of the River: Lost Worlds of Early Australia*. This essay is an edited extract from Grace's keynote address for the 2021 AGHS conference.

Rosemary Purdie

Major plant collectors in the Simpson Desert, 1879–1979

The Simpson is characterised by longitudinal dunes running parallel to each other, creating rows of dune crests like these in the central part of the desert, photo RW Purdie

The sand dunes of the Simpson Desert cover 130,000 square kilometres at the intersection of the Northern Territory (NT), Queensland (Qld) and South Australia (SA). Although European explorers first entered the Desert in the 1840s and 1860s, plant collectors only started visiting in the 1870s. The specimens they deposited in various Australian herbaria provide a history of the Desert's plant collectors and collecting. From 1879 to 1979 around 100 individuals gathered 3,556 specimens, although just 10 people were responsible for 66 per cent of the material. We know many of these people only by their name from a herbarium specimen. Even the prominent collectors have left behind few personal details; none appear to have written diaries detailing their activities.

See **www.gardenhistory.org.au** for Purdie's annotated timeline of the first century of plant collecting in the Simpson Desert

Before I introduce you to the major collectors from the 1930s to the 1960s, here is an overview of their predecessors. From 1879 to 1889, nine people are known to have brought back just over 100 specimens from the Simpson Desert. The first collections came from the Finke River on the Desert's western margins. They were made during 1879 and 1880 by Reverend Friedrich Adolf Kemp, while he was a missionary based at Hermannsburg Mission southwest of Alice Springs. However, most of the specimens were gathered by pastoralist WH Cornish in 1885 in the Mulligan River area on the northeastern side of the desert. Over the next four decades 56 collections were made by six people, the most notable by John Burton Cleland, Professor of Pathology at the University of Adelaide. In 1929 he collected at Rumbalara,

a siding on the just completed narrow-gauge railway line between Oodnadatta and Alice Springs. With Rumbalara providing easy access to the western margins of the desert, the following decades saw a burst of collecting by botanists, other scientists and intrepid amateurs.

1930s: Robert L Crocker

Son of a South Australian farmer, Crocker (1914–1963) studied at Adelaide University where he developed strong interests in geology and botany. After graduating in 1935, he joined the Commonwealth Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Division of Soils in Adelaide and was working there when asked to join the Madigan Expedition to cross the Simpson Desert from west to east in June–July 1939, starting from Charlotte Waters in the NT. It was only the second known crossing by Europeans. Crocker was the expedition botanist whose tasks included making a comprehensive plant collection to help study the area's ecology. It took 19 days for the nine-member team with their 19 camels to complete the main west-east traverse from the Hale River to the NT/Qld border, across 626 sand dunes over a distance of 328 kilometres, before continuing to Birdsville.

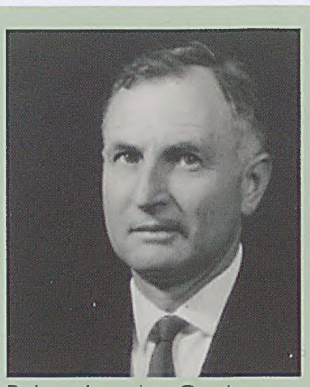
1950s: George M Chippendale

Sydney-born and educated Chippendale (1921–2010) left school at 14 and two years later started work as a tea boy at the city's Royal Botanic Gardens. After fighting in the Second World War, he returned to the Gardens and studied for his Bachelor of Science at Sydney University. In 1954 Chippendale moved to Alice Springs to take up a position as the first taxonomist at the newly created NT Herbarium. From 1954 to 1959, as part of his work to help develop the herbarium's plant collections, he made at least 14 trips to the western and northwestern parts of the Desert, collecting mainly in areas around the Finke, Hale and Plenty rivers and at Andado.

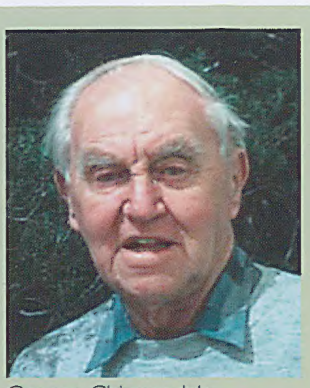
CSIRO Division of Land Research and Regional Survey staff were also actively collecting in the NT during the 1950s. The main collectors were Senior Research Officers Bob Winkworth and Ray Perry and Botanical Assistant Mike Lazarides, who between them collected 39 per cent of the decade's total.

1960s: TR Noel Lothian, David E Symon, Jennifer Must and A Clifford (Cliff) Beauglehole

Melbourne-born and educated Lothian (1915–2004) worked at botanic gardens in Melbourne and Christchurch, New Zealand (NZ) before commencing studies in 1938 at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew. After the Second World War, and a stint at Lincoln Agricultural College in NZ, he was appointed Director of the Adelaide Botanic Garden in 1948. His widespread

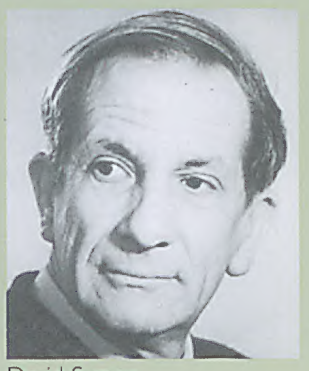


Robert Langdon Crocker

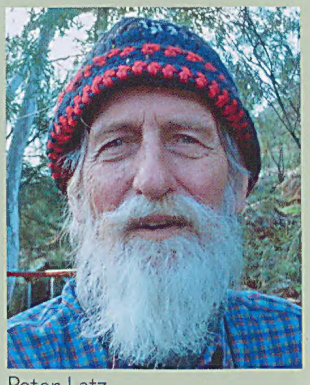


George Chippendale

Noel Lothian



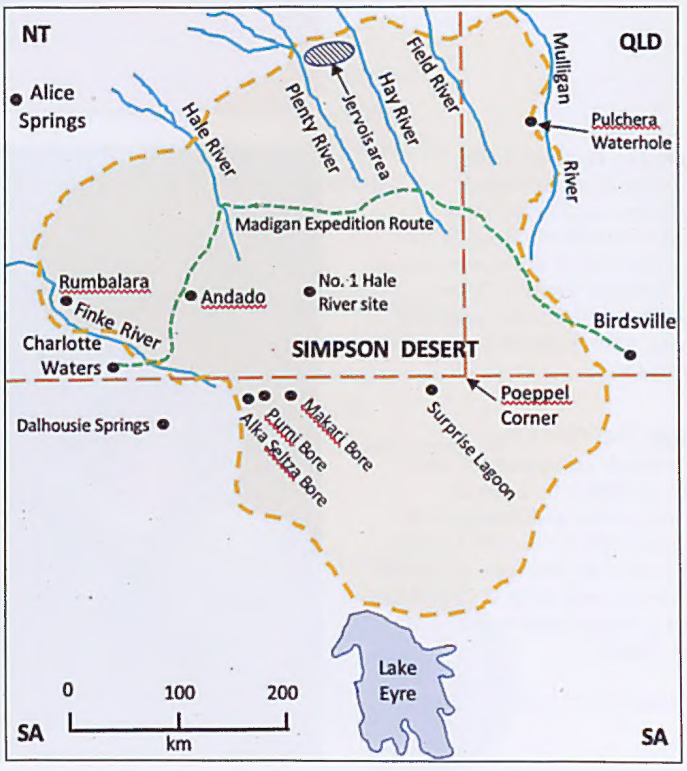
David Symon



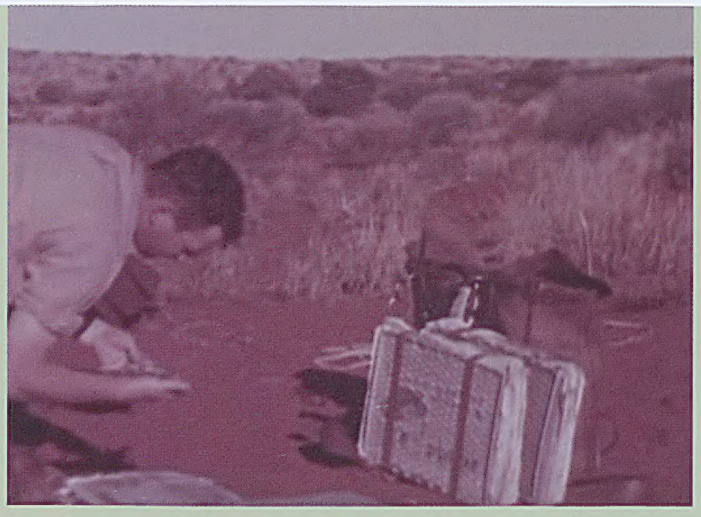
Peter Latz

Five of the most prolific Simpson Desert plant collectors, images courtesy Australian National Botanic Gardens photograph collection

Below Generalised map of the Simpson Desert showing main locations. Adapted from Mark Shepherd, *The Simpson Desert: natural history and human endeavour*, Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, South Australian Branch Inc., Adelaide, 1992



Crocker was only the second person to collect the distinctive Waddy tree (*Acacia peuce*) with its sheoak-like leaves and flat fruit pods up to 5 cm wide and 20 cm long. It is a nationally vulnerable species that occurs in three disjunct locations on the eastern and western margins of the Simpson Desert, photo RW Purdie



Film footage shot by David Marshall, the official photographer on the Madigan Expedition, showing Crocker checking specimens from his plant presses during the trip. He would have placed the specimens between sheets of newspaper interleaved with blotting paper, all strapped tightly together between wire frames. Botanists today use the same method, although corrugated cardboard has replaced blotting paper and many press frames are made of wood. Still image from https://unsealed4x4.com.au/video-cecil-madigans-1939-simpson-desert-expedition/

Lothian, Symon, Must and Beauglehole each collected the widespread herb Prince of Wales feathers (*Ptilotus polystachyus*); it can have either deep red or green flowers [detail on the right]. Herbaceous species comprise around 75 per cent of the desert flora and are only present after rainfall. Collectors often plan field trips after such conditions to maximise the number of species they encounter.

Left The red-bud mallee (*Eucalyptus pachyphylla*), collected by Chippendale east of the Plenty River in the northern dune fields, was among his earliest Simpson Desert specimens. The bulky buds and fruits make it challenging to press flat.

Right The Parrot Pea (*Crotalaria cunninghamii*) was also collected by Lothian, Symon, Must and Beauglehole. A perennial shrub with flowers to 5 cm long, the species mostly grows in deep sand on the dunes and is widespread throughout the Desert.

photos RW Purdie

collecting in South Australia included a trip in 1963 to the southwestern part of the Desert, where he made extensive collections in the dune fields east of Dalhousie Springs.

Symon (1920–2011) joined the Agronomy Department, Waite Agricultural Research Institute in Adelaide where he was appointed Systematic Botanist in 1956 and Senior Lecturer in Botany in 1962. He collected widely in southern Australia to build up the Institute's herbarium and visited the Simpson in 1965, 1966 and 1974. His collections helped increase knowledge about the diversity and distribution of plants in the South Australian part of the desert.

Must joined the NT Herbarium in Alice Springs as a technical assistant in 1968 and was the first woman to make extensive collections in the Simpson. Her initial collecting trip was to the Andado area in early July that year, followed by a second visit a month later. In late July 1968, the notable amateur collector, Beauglehole (1920–2002), collected over a wide area to the north–northwest, north–northeast and southwest of Andado. An orchardist at Portland, Victoria, he travelled extensively in many parts of Australia to get specimens for his personal herbarium.

Latz collected many herbaceous species that grow only during good seasons. They range from the 50cm-high cut-leaf goodenia (*Goodenia cycloptera*), top, to the tiny, 1cm-high creeping parakeelya (*Calandrinia ptychosperma*). Latz was the first person to collect the latter in the Desert, in May 1972, photos RW Purdie

1970s: Peter K. Latz

Latz (1941–), son of Lutheran lay missionaries, was brought up on Hermannsburg Aboriginal Mission southwest of Alice Springs. After working as a stockman, road train driver and in other jobs, he gained a BSc. at Adelaide University in the late 1960s, majoring in Botany and Zoology, then became a botanist at the NT Herbarium. His first collecting trip to the Simpson was in 1968 and he continued collecting there for the following four decades. He is undoubtedly the most prolific collector in the area, with his specimens including a large proportion of the often more difficult-to-find herbaceous species as well as trees and shrubs.

Conclusion

From the earliest collections in the Simpson, botanical activity was dictated by access and seasonal conditions. Collecting increased as access improved, mostly from tracks associated with oil and gas exploration. The number of species collected on each trip was generally greatest after high rainfall seasons due to the profuse blooming of herbaceous species, although access then (as now) could also be limited by flooded rivers and clay soils making tracks impassable. While most collectors were professional botanists or researchers, amateur botanists and tertiary students also played an important role.

The collectors introduced in this article encapsulate the work of other botanists from the first century of collecting activity in the desert to the present day. Professional and amateur collectors are still drawn to the area by its remoteness and beauty and continue documenting its floral diversity.

Dr Rosemary Purdie is a retired plant ecologist who has collected more than 12,500 herbarium specimens from across Australia, including around 550 in the Simpson Desert during seven trips between 1977 and 2019.

Mrs HM Gulliver, *Herald* [Melbourne], 18 September 1934, p. 14, photo Peggy Clark

A symbiosis of horticulture and painting

Exploring Henrietta Gulliver's gardens through her art

Beverley F Ronalds

Henrietta Gulliver (1866–1945) is known for her paintings but was also an enthusiastic professional florist, horticulturist and landscape designer. She melded these skills through her life: her gardens provided subjects for her landscape paintings, her intimate understanding of their flowers enriched her still-life studies, and her floral arrangements brimmed with creative flair. Gardens and flowers were also a central feature in Henrietta's public activities. Her substantial portfolio of paintings, together with newspaper articles describing her work and her surviving correspondence, help us to visualise the lovely gardens and floral decors she created around Melbourne.

Born on 29 October 1866 in Sale, Gippsland, Victoria, Henrietta Maria Shanklin was the fifth child of Robert Shanklin and Maria Barbara née Ronalds. Her parents were talented, entrepreneurial, energetic and big-hearted, although not wealthy – Robert was a pharmacist; Maria established a farm, a garden nursery and a pioneering business tying artificial flies for fishing. Both were also amateur artists. Henrietta acquired their attributes, being described as 'clever', 'enterprising', 'dynamic' and 'generous'.

Florist

Henrietta went to Melbourne in about 1885 to work for her uncle, Nathaniel Ronalds, who was a leading horticulturist and florist. Living at his Brighton nursery enabled her to further develop her natural abilities in gardening and floral design. In late 1896 she established, with a colleague, her own business, the Central Floral Studio in Collins Street in the city. Henrietta and Miss Wright were already well known as 'artists full of originality and skilful execution' and were soon 'appointed florists and table decorators to His Excellency', the Governor of Victoria.

Their beautiful floral arrangements were frequently described in the press. In 1898 a tribute presented at a final night at the Princess Theatre was of their creation. It was a 2.4 m long bon-bon decorated with flowers which, when pulled, rained 'a perfect storm of roses in garlands' over the leading lady. The spectacle generated prolonged applause.

Holmby Lodge, Cheltenham

In 1900, at the age of 33, Henrietta married George Ekins Gulliver, a very successful pharmacist. (He had invented the famous brand Laxettes for relief from constipation.) In a few years she had passed over the Central Floral Studio to her niece and transitioned to a new life in which the luxuries of time and money, as well as the encouragement of her husband, allowed her to pursue her wider interests.

The Gullivers moved to a farm on the east side of what was then called Point Nepean Road in Cheltenham; it is shown on the Plan of Jamison Estate, Cheltenham, c. 1902. They named the property *Holmby Lodge* after George's birthplace in Northamptonshire, England. George had previous experience in the area growing lavender and distilling the perfume for sale in his chemist shops, so they planted nearly half a hectare of *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Vera' and also trialled other scented plants. Henrietta laid out an English garden, which was described in the *Newsletter* of the City of Moorabbin Historical Society as 'one of the show places of Cheltenham'. As well as hollyhocks, larkspurs, sweet Williams and Canterbury bells, she created a spinney of bluebells. A brushwood fence supported passionfruit vines and there were two Moreton Bay fig trees. She immortalised her hawthorn path in a painting now held by the State Library of Victoria.

Artist

Probably the first record of Henrietta's artistic output was the splashwork background of a painted manuscript commissioned in Gippsland in 1885. She took drawing classes

HM Gulliver, *The Hawthorn Path*, 1909, State Library of Victoria. Most likely originally donated by Henrietta to the Beaumaris and District Historical Trust

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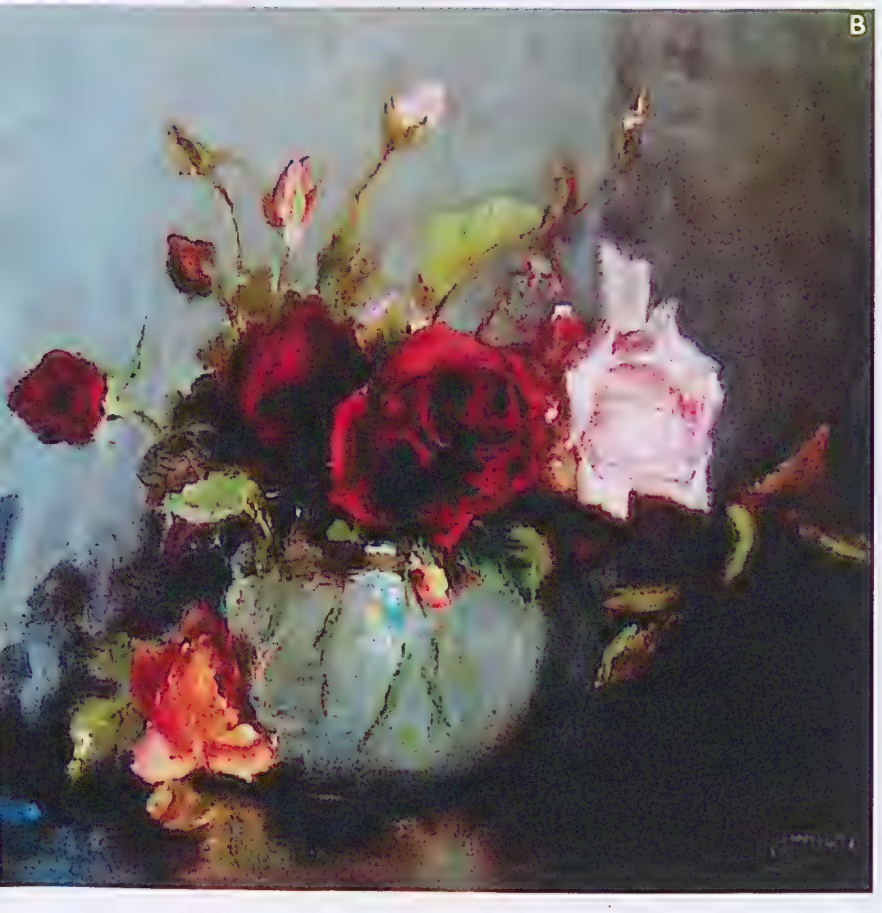
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at the National Gallery of Victoria Art School in 1892 and again through the period 1896–99. Henrietta quickly developed as an accomplished landscape and flower painter. In 1902, having set up a studo at *Holmby Lodge*, she helped to form what became the Melbourne Society of Women Painters and Sculptors. Her 'delightful painting', 'most beautifully handled', of chrysanthemums interlaced with hawthorn featured the next year at the Victorian Artists' Society annual exhibition. In 1905 she was an invited exhibitor at Fred McCubbin's studio and in 1918 was a foundation member of the Twenty Melbourne Painters Society.

Having an 'extraordinary devotion to flowers', Henrietta explained to a journalist that her art 'keeps her friends around her' even after they had faded. Her flower compositions were also long popular on the art market.

Panteg, Sassafras

In 1915 Henrietta created a mountain home at Sassafras called *Panteg*. The area 'she had set her heart on' included part of today's Ferny Creek Bushland Reserve (see Plan of Panteg Estate, Sassafras, 1926). After clearing a hectare of the substantial estate, she built a two-storey house and planned out an exotic garden against the thickly timbered backdrop. She terraced the slope with rock. Winding stone paths led to spaces with flowering shrubs giving a 'riot of coloring (sic.) and scent' and a small wood 'carpeted with bluebells', as was recorded in 'Talent in the Near Hills', an article in the *Sun News-pictorial* (Melbourne, 17 November 1939, p. 45). She also created a walk lined with hazelnut and walnut trees, and planted groves of larch, chestnut, silver birch, beech, Japanese maple, poplar and lilac.

Writing to artist Hilda Rix Nicholas, Henrietta enthused that in autumn 'the whole Garden is burnished with bronzes, reds, yellows & orange coloring – glorious'. In spring, too, 'the place was a joy – millions of Rhododendrons 8 ft high, foxgloves, clematis roses & best of all a most beautiful white wisteria...rampant growth everywhere – Oh joy & God bless our Gardens'. She painted the scene across the valley from her window, while her flower studies documented the 'pageant of the seasons' month by month. The garden survives today on Panteg Road.

Henrietta, George and their two daughters travelled to Europe and North America, where she garnered further ideas for her gardens and her art. They sold *Holmby Lodge* in late 1922 ahead of one of these trips. In 1925, the year after

their return to Melbourne, Henrietta mounted a solo exhibition depicting Australian and British subjects. They then returned to England and settled in 1927 in a timber-framed Tudor house called *Old Mead* with 13 hectares of land, where she was able to remodel a real 'old-world' English garden. Situated near the village of Capel, Surrey, it is now Grade II listed. After George died in 1929, Henrietta sold the property and travelled extensively until 1936.

Community leader

Back in Melbourne she re-entered the local art scene, exhibiting frequently and serving for a second term as president of the Melbourne Society of Women Painters. Opening the society's annual exhibition in 1937, Henrietta extolled the importance of the artistic life of the community. In addition to *Panteg*, she had a succession of beautifully furnished suburban homes including *The Elms* in St Kilda Street, Brighton, and 44 Grange Road, Toorak.

Henrietta wrote in her mid-70s that 'life is so teeming with interest'. She had held sketching parties at *Holmby Lodge* and at the nearby beach; later, artists were frequent guests at *Panteg*. Views of these properties painted by her friends are preserved in private and public collections. Henrietta routinely decorated artists' events with her seasonal flowers. In August 1904, she combined ivy with peach and apple blossom from *Holmby Lodge* for the Victorian Artists' Society masquerade ball. For the Women Painters' exhibition in early October 1937, her choice from the garden at *Panteg* were lilies, roses, lilac, azaleas and rhododendrons in shades of rose pink, red, mauve and purple. In April 1938 she 'was up with the cold misty dawn' at *Panteg* and found crimson autumn leaves, which she arranged 'with golden chrysanthemums and branches heavy with medlars and pomegranates' for an exhibition opening at the Athenaeum Gallery later in the day.

When hosting charity functions, Henrietta decorated her gardens and festooned her homes with floral arrangements, as well as cutting masses of flowers to sell along with her produce. One of her special causes was the Red Cross, particularly through the two world wars; another over an extended period was the Free Kindergarten Union. She held executive positions in both organisations. Throughout her extremely busy life, Henrietta contributed prominently in her public and artistic endeavours to within months of her death on 15 July 1945. As one of her obituaries noted, 'her passing leaves a blank to all that loved her'.

A HM Gulliver, *Flower piece*, Family Papers
B HM Gulliver, *Still Life with Roses*, courtesy of Menzies Art Brands
C HM Gulliver, *Dahlias*, c. 1913, Castlemaine Art Museum, gift of the artist
D HM Gulliver, *Ducks*, c. 1923, State Library of Victoria

Beverley Ronalds is tracing the horticultural and artistic accomplishments of her extended family. Henrietta's heritage also includes her grandfather Alfred Ronalds (1802–1860), who was an early professional artist and nurseryman in Victoria. The first well-known botanical illustrator in the family was Alfred's cousin Betsey Ronalds (1788–1854) in England.

Author image by Tony Bowers

David Bedford

Xanthorrhoeas in Australian garden history

The approved common name for the endemic Australian genus *Xanthorrhoea* is grass trees. In South Australia they are known as yaccas. The clearest possible common name is simply 'xanthorrhoeas' so that is what I will use in this article.

Above Xanthorrhoeas, Mount Kiangarow, Bunya National Park, Queensland photo Francesca Beddie

I have a confession to make, I'm not really a garden history expert. Instead, I have a background as a biologist, botanist, taxonomist, photographer and as a past director of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. Therefore, this article does not claim to be a definitive history of the genus *Xanthorrhoea* in Australian gardens – it is a personal account of my experience with growing members of this most distinctive Australian plant genus, which in turn will dispel some of the myths about cultivating xanthorrhoeas in the Australian garden.

There are 28 described species and five described subspecies of xanthorrhoeas in Australia. All except one species, *Xanthorrhoea thorntonii*, grow in the better-watered parts of Australia, those with over 250 mm of rainfall per year; mostly they are not the desert plants many imagine them to be. Xanthorrhoeas are also a relatively modern group of plants, not close relatives of the cycads and tree ferns that some compare them with. Although the habit is indeed similar, xanthorrhoeas are highly evolved monocotyledonous plants with secondary thickening. They are related to *Dracaena* and *Yucca* among others.

While I am primarily a taxonomist, and my PhD was on the classification and evolution of xanthorrhoeas, my interest in the group has

meant I have been growing them from seed since the mid-1970s. My long association with gardens comes through my horticulturist mother, Kay Bedford.

Known to and used by First Nations peoples for many thousands of years, the earliest European collections and descriptions were made by botanist Daniel Solander, who accompanied the wealthy collector and naturalist Joseph Banks on Captain James Cook's *Endeavour* voyage. It was Solander who invented and wrote the name *Xanthorrhoea* on his field-collecting label, which is still attached to the specimen he collected, now in the Natural History Museum, London, although he did not formally publish the name before his death in 1782, leaving that to others whom Banks allowed to access his collections. Solander was an excellent botanist, and before his journey on the *Endeavour* he was very academic. Unfortunately for science, he discovered the pleasures of society and fame (and women) after returning to England, so he didn't publish. Although Banks became famous and made much of his position, he was not a scientist so he didn't publish either. That lack of publication by those with first-hand knowledge of the plants they collected in 1770 resulted in considerable nomenclatural confusion and delayed the understanding of parts of the Australian flora for many years. It was left to other botanist collectors such as Robert Brown (1773–1858) to do the work.

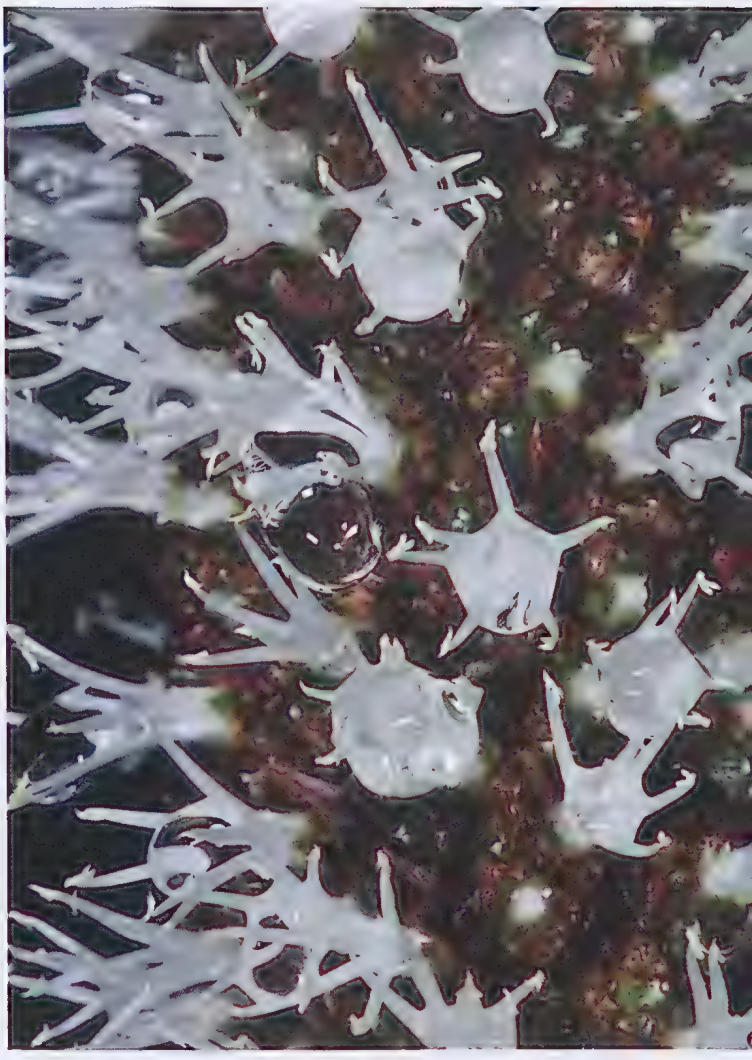
The name comes from two Greek words *xanthos* meaning yellow or golden and *rhoea* meaning flowing. Solander was describing the yellow resinous substance that flowed from the cut trunk of the first species collected, *Xanthorrhoea resinosa*. In fact, that appears to be the only species with yellow resin as all others that I have observed have red resin, so it is something of a misnomer. If Solander's experience had been greater, perhaps he would have chosen the name erythrrhoea (from the Greek *erythrós* for red)!

My history with xanthorrhoeas

When I first became interested in the genus *Xanthorrhoea* in the early 1970s it was primarily because there was so little information available about them and very little understanding. As an undergraduate university student at the University of Queensland, I was intrigued by the fact that my lecturers were unable to identify xanthorrhoeas to species level when we conducted fieldwork around Brisbane. That was quite an interesting challenge for a botanist-to-be.

Little did I know that the lack of identifications spoke more about my lecturers' ignorance than a total lack of knowledge. In fact, Alma T Lee, working part time at the National Herbarium of NSW, Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney, had written two excellent treatments of the genus in 1966 (*Contr. New South Wales Natl. Herb.* 4: 35-54 (1966a) and *Alma T Lee, Contr.*

Left This plant, grown from a seed germinated by the author in 2004, and growing in a neighbour's garden, has developed a significant trunk with the apex about 750 mm high, and the top of the leaf crown about 2400 mm high. While this is an exceptional example and may have benefited from fertiliser, it proves that one can have significant-sized plants in a very reasonable time.
photo David Bedford



Left For some variety, I suggest you do not simply focus on growing the trunked species. *Xanthorrhoea macronema*, which never develops a trunk, has unusual bottle-brush-like flowers on long slender scapes and can add beauty to your garden.

Right Xanthorrhoeas only flower in their set flowering season. It is possible that a fire helps to synchronise flowering in the season after the fire but that is only a presumption. I have observed many xanthorrhoeas flowering without fire – including in my own garden. Droplets of nectar in new flowers, showing why the plants are so popular with a very wide range of pollinators.

photos David Bedford

New South Wales Natl. Herb., Fl. Ser. No. 34 (1966 b)). Although primarily focussed on the NSW species, Lee had adequately covered the species in UQ botany field sites. However, once I began my studies in earnest, I found the situation was more complex and that there were some undescribed species to be found.

The ignorance about xanthorrhoeas went well beyond their classification, partly due to some very unscientific presumptions about the relationship of the group to ancient plants such as cycads and tree ferns. The most glaring misdirection was the result of a study published in 1955 by CF Lewis ('Observations on the age of the Australian Grass Tree, Xanthorrhoea australis', *Victorian Naturalist*, 72: 124-125) , who extrapolated the age of the plants from the small number of leaves produced by a one- to two-year-old seedling. In doing so, Lewis did not realise that the rate of leaf production of an adult plant was 100 to 250 times greater. He therefore ascribed ages of thousands of years to relatively small-trunked plants, effectively imagining they took thousands of years to grow. There is no doubt that myth has had a very considerable negative effect on gardening with xanthorrhoeas.

Usually, people are interested in knowing how quickly xanthorrhoeas develop noticeable aerial trunks. However, the large leaf crowns of some species are as significant a part of a garden landscape as the trunks themselves. In terms of aerial trunks, some of the faster-growing species can develop short trunks in 10 years, as seen in the illustration on page 19, which shows a plant that I germinated and grew from seed. Such plants have large and attractive leaf crowns and short trunks. The same plants have for many years also produced flowering spikes in their flowering season. At the same time, it should be understood that different species develop aerial trunks at different rates and some species never have obvious above-ground trunks. A good indication of which species develop tall trunks quickly is readily available by observing the species in the wild.

Xanthorrhoeas in Australian gardens

The history of *cultivating* xanthorrhoeas in Australian gardens appears to date from the beginnings of the Australian plants' movement in the 1950s. Of course, gardens, both public

and private, that incorporated natural bushland with naturally occurring xanthorrhoeas will have existed much earlier than this. That native plant movement would normally have encouraged the cultivation of xanthorrhoeas in gardens. However, perhaps because of the ill-informed reputation for extremely slow growth, the desire to incorporate xanthorrhoeas instead encouraged – unfortunately – the large-scale raiding of bushland for xanthorrhoeas to transplant. I write 'unfortunately' both because of the resultant damage to bushland but also because, in my experience, the vast majority, probably more than 90 per cent of transplants, will die within five years of being moved. The reasons for this are manifold. First, nearly all species of xanthorrhoeas have a widespread shallow root system, most of which is lost when the plants are cut to fit plastic pots. Second, unlike palms, xanthorrhoeas do not readily grow a new root system, which means that the plants survive for only a few years on the few remaining roots and the food stored in their stems. When the food storage runs out then they die. The transplanters and selling nurseries take no responsibility but instead blame the gardener, admittedly with some justification: xanthorrhoeas are highly susceptible to root rot diseases such as phytophthora, and are also, according to the Mycorrhizal Associations of Australian Plants, quite dependent on the natural mycorrhiza of their native habitats, as are many other Australian plants.

This does not mean that successful transplants are impossible, only that they are rare. It requires taking at least a cubic metre of soil with each plant or else considerable luck and great horticultural skill to succeed. When you consider that xanthorrhoeas are actually very easy to grow from seed and that some species grow quite fast, such actions appear unnecessary.

Growing your own

I have always obtained fresh seed from plants along the roadside or, with permission, from private properties. A bedsheet spread on the ground adjacent to the plant will catch a lot of seeds when a mature fruiting spike is gently tapped in the direction of the sheet. You don't need hundreds of seeds.

Because xanthorrhoeas have broad shallow root systems I do not recommend the common nursery practice of planting seed in trays then pricking out into small pots. Instead, plant a single seed in the centre of a pot of at least 200 mm diameter. The soil mix that I have found most successful is a 50:50 mix of your local topsoil mixed with washed coarse river sand. Xanthorrhoeas do not like wet feet, so a well-drained mixture is important. They should be well watered but only once or twice a week, depending on natural rainfall. With fresh seed, germination usually occurs within two weeks. I grow the plants in the same pots for a couple of years until they are well established, with five to 10 leaves. Plant them out with as little root disturbance as possible, water them in and watch them grow.

Xanthorrhoea johnsonii flowering spikes
photo David Bedford

David Bedford worked as a botanist at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney and as Director of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens before managing a private business in Brisbane. He has studied and grown xanthorrhoeas for over 40 years, having completed a PhD on the taxonomy and evolution of the genus. David also wrote the *Flora of Australia* treatment for the group and contributed the sections on *Xanthorrhoea* to a number of state flora publications.

Why is history important to garden designers?

Because you must understand the past to plan for the future

Jeannie Sim

History is my milieu, my motivation and my obsession. It probably began in high school (1973) when I prepared an art assignment on local historic buildings that were under-appreciated or under threat. This involved site visits, documentation and research: such fun finding a free-standing brick kitchen on a sugarcane farm, a futuristic Eddie Oribin church and a slab hut in the upper headwaters of the Proserpine River (now under a dam lake). The twin attractions were hunting history and protecting old built design. Studying architecture increased my passion for understanding history and opened my eyes to the need to learn more about garden history. I continued my studies with a landscape architecture degree and went overseas to England to focus on conservation studies at York University. Returning to Brisbane, I soon realised there was no published work on local garden history. So off I started on my doctoral trek that revealed so much data and so many possibilities. Halfway through, I became a full-time academic, teaching landscape architecture at Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Brisbane until I retired in 2016.

My work had three professional aspects: university lecturing (landscape architecture and design history); researching Queensland/Tropicalian garden history; and consulting in historic designed landscape conservation. I used and played with history in different ways in each aspect. Let me explain.

Valuing local garden design

I have been fascinated with garden design (and eventually all designed landscapes and associated cultural landscapes) since the early 1970s. I fretted about protecting old public parks and distinctive Brisbane private gardens when there was no reference source available to guide my actions. At the inaugural AGHS meeting in Queensland in August 1988, one woman asked if there were any historic gardens in Queensland. That was a pivotal moment for me: an epiphany. I had to hunt down the data and write about garden design in Queensland. I had to start getting the message out, start the storytelling and awareness raising. Those were heady days that supported arduous tertiary study. Along the way, I developed insights that knocked my world. I realised there was a whole area of study about warm climate garden design that was grossly underexplored, across the globe. Concentration on temperate climate civilisations had relegated the tropics and subtropics into blurring enigmas, devalued because of their difference and ignorance of their significance. I became almost evangelical in researching, writing, and lecturing about Tropicalian landscape design especially shade gardening practices).

Under a poinciana tree by Tatters, Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.)

Tropicalia garden design uses iconic tropical species such as palms, bamboo, tropical fig trees, epiphytes and rainforest vines (lianes). It combines traditionally ecologically disparate species (for example pines and palms, succulents and aroids) and contrasting colours in plant types, as well as including shade gardening practices.

Protecting historic parks and gardens

The other aspect of sharing the knowledge is the practical application of this insight towards conserving historic places. I began with public parks in Brisbane including the oldest extant white-fella garden, namely, the Brisbane Botanic Gardens. I side-stepped a little and became a recurring consultant on the garden and grounds of Queensland's Government House in suburban Paddington. On reflection, I have not done enough in this area and greatly regret not training up a replacement professional, which brings me to my day job of teaching. I taught conservation theory from 1991 and landscape design history spanned from 1994 until my retirement.
Since there are many wonderful stories about conservation already in this journal, I propose to concentrate the rest of this article on the intriguing theoretical context to conservation and history.

Opposite Nifty images as well as good stories bring garden history alive. Tropicalian plants in maturity from the George Street boundary of Brisbane Botanic Gardens and the entrance to QUT (Old Government House). *Monstera deliciosa* used as a ground cover under the *Ficus benjamina*, poking through the cast iron fence, images sourced from Jeannie Sim

A Brisbane Botanic Gardens (Queens Park Lagoon) from 1890s, courtesy John Oxley Library

B Government House Brisbane, image Jeannie Sim

C Queen's Park plaque, image Jeannie Sim

Convincing young designers that history matters

In 2005 I was tasked with setting up a new introductory design history subject for a huge combined class of architecture, landscape architecture, industrial design and interior design students. It was a pleasure researching further into my sister professions and trying to convince some already indoctrinated students that history did and does matter to them. Around 2010, I also had students in fashion and interactive visual design/graphic design in the mix. My library of reference books grew exponentially as I learned more and helped my students find the stories that mattered to them. I came up with a cunning plan that involved providing evidence to the hard-headed Modernists and muzzy-headed Postmodernists (all mostly Millennial tech-crazy youths), that history was useful and meaningful to them as budding designers, that they needed to know some history if they wanted to make change and create new things in their careers. Awakening an appreciation of the real links across professions was also a vital part of this process. I'd like to share these big ideas aka my cunning plan to change perceptions about why history matters. Sometimes it worked.

Telling interesting stories is the best way to engage students. Seducing them with nifty images also helps. Unfortunately, I suspect I overwhelmed them with too much evidence, but that is a confession for another day. My ideas were sorted around seven strong evidence-based reasons why history is useful.

Reason 1. Knowing what works and what doesn't isn't about accepting blindly what some other designer says is true. Finding a personal critical eye is about honing observational and reasoning skills and applying them to new work. The awareness of historic design successes and failures is part of this analytical skill development.

Reason 2. While an unexamined life may not be worth living, a career in design that is not underpinned by theoretical reflection has a limited likelihood of true success. We use historical examples of design to extend understanding and add to contemporary design theory and practice. So many new ideas are based on a rejection of the past or a need to find the right voice for new times, activities and values. History and change are a team act.

Reason 3. Of course, one can also use the past as a gigantic smorgasbord of goodies to borrow, revisit, reinterpret, pay homage or just steal! Postmodernism had the best fun legitimising

sampling and appropriating design ideas. Fashion is a great example of how fast we reuse design ideas from one generation to the next. Meanwhile, gardens just keep growing!

Reason 4. More honourably perhaps, understanding the social and cultural significance of design ideas can help designers make better decisions. Ultimately good design is about helping people and that entails maintaining and creating a sense of place and local identity. Historic places and things contribute so much to this awareness of belonging. There are strong connections between environmental psychology (theory) and making better cities (practice).

Reason 5. Other ethical concerns for designers are sustainable practice, and social and economic fairness. Designing ethically has become vital for practitioners as we face the many challenges of climate change. Here environmental history can provide the examples of past errors for contemporary designers. As a landscape architect, I can show product designers and architects that design needs to consider living things and systems, as these are the vital context for all creative endeavours.

Reason 6. The next matter is the active conservation of historic places and things. Understanding the past is what informs conservation practitioners making decisions about significance and value. Undertaking the appropriate repair and material choices also includes the intangible heritage practices we see in garden making. Designers need to learn that maintenance is essential to all designed things and places, living and non-living. My skin crawls with distress at the thought of designers never revisiting their work to assess how it has fared over time and use. This is real reflective practice.

Reason 7. Finally, I reminded my students that history is fun. That there is great pleasure to be had in looking at and touching old things. I did warn them about catching the collecting bug and ending up with too many vintage cars, toys, clothes or crockery! I still giggle silently at the current generation's fascination with mid-century Modern furniture and fittings. I giggle because designers and design teachers my age or older typically considered those items were just 'good design' and not another design style within a history of change. The hubris of Modernists can be so 'cute'.

In summary, I warned my students that if you only wanted 'to get designing and have fun', without knowing this broad background of design history, you would be doomed and cursed with being a blind follower and not an informed leader in design change. Above all, I wanted my students to learn that history is not only useful but enjoyable as well.

Top
Hoop pine in Brisbane Botanic Gardens

Bottom Epiphyllum

images Jeannie Sim

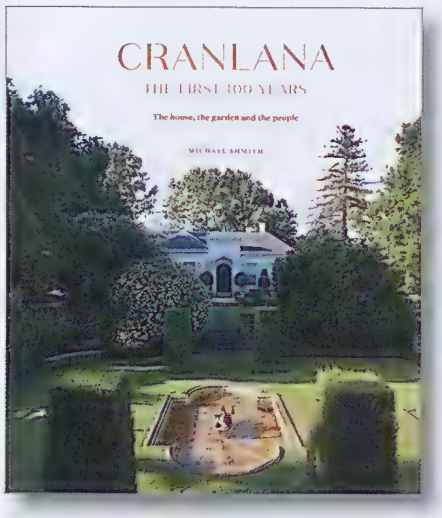
If you are interested in reading further about why history matters, I highly recommend these books: John Arnold (2000) *History: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press and Neil Postman (1993) *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*, Vintage Books.

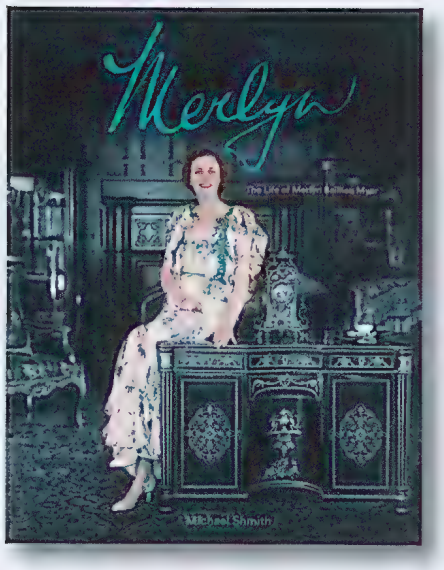
Jeannie Sim is a retired garden historian and landscape architect now communing with her garden and her crafting, while maintaining the history website for the Friends of Brisbane Botanic Gardens.

For the bookshelf

Michael Shmith, *Cranlana: the first 100 years. The house, the garden, the people*
Hardie Grant Books, 2019, 257 pp

This fine book was commissioned by the Myer family to mark 100 years of the Myer family in this gracious property in Toorak, the Melbourne suburb of much prized real estate and verdant gardens.





In November 2021 Hardie Grant published *Merlyn: The Life of Merlyn Baillieu Myer*, also written by Michael Shmith, with research by historian Dr Stella M Barber. Helen Page's review will appear on the AGHS website.

Sidney Myer established Myer department stores in Victoria in the early 1900s. In 1920 he and his wife, Merlyn, purchased *Torrie*, a single-storeyed Edwardian villa in Toorak. Over the next 12 years renovations turned it into an elegant, brick, rendered white two-storey home, renamed *Cranlana*.

The book, beautifully illustrated with both historic and contemporary photos, chronicles the house's transformation, its collections of art, ceramics and furniture, and the development of the garden. This review will focus on the garden.

The Myer family is to be commended for not only commissioning this book but for the management of the extensive archive that Michael Shmith was able to draw on. I enjoyed particularly the photos of the archival records of the garden, including the receipt for payment to Irwin's Disappearing Garden Spray for instillation of a garden sprinkler system. It was also pleasing to read a detailed account of the garden almost to the present time by former garden manager Anne Nadenbousch. This describes the garden as I have seen it on my few visits.

In 1932 the Myers purchased the adjoining block of land and commissioned architect Harold Desbrowe-Annear to design the garden. Sidney Myer and Desbrowe -Annear visited Nobelius nurseries at Emerald in the Dandenongs in search of plants for the garden. The book draws on correspondence from the nursery.

As Shmith points out, 'Sadly, it would prove to be Desbrowe-Annear's final legacy, but what a magnificent and lasting achievement it was.' The sunken garden has stood the test of time and, for those fortunate to visit the garden, together with the magnificent trees on the property, makes a lasting impression. Desbrowe-Annear also designed the imposing gates, which stand out for anyone driving along Clendon Road.

In 1934 Sir Sidney Myer died while walking in the street near *Cranlana*. His widow Dame Merlyn became custodian of the vision of Sidney and Desbrowe-Annear – a vision she was determined to maintain.

During Second World War Merlyn let *Cranlana* to the US forces. By the mid-1950s the garden was in urgent need of replenishment, so Merlyn commissioned a report from landscape designer, John Stevens. This long document, reproduced in full in the book, makes very interesting reading but Merlyn decided not to make any of the significant changes recommended by Stevens. (AGHS members who attended the trip to Little Desert and Wyperfield with Rodger and Gwen Elliot in 1999 will remember fondly John Stevens joining us on that trip.) The garden stayed unchanged until after her death in 1982. From then until the present day *Cranlana* is used for conducting the *Cranlana* program to promote informed discussion on responsible leadership and ethical practice.

I commend this book to everyone, but particularly to fellow Melburnians and Victorians who have grown up with the Myer Emporium as part of our lives: you will not be disappointed and you will learn where the name *Cranlana* came from.

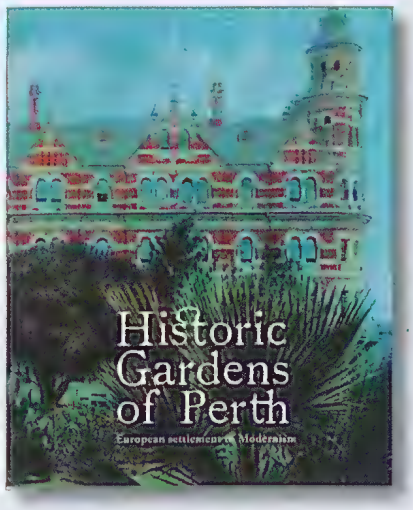
Helen Page is a member of the AGHS and past chair of the Victorian branch

Historic Gardens of Perth: European Settlement to Modernism, forthcoming

To commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Australian Garden History Society, the state branches were asked by the National Management Committee (NMC) to consider a project that would celebrate the occasion and were invited to apply for a grant of up to $10,0000, matched by the branch. This got our committee in Western Australia thinking.

The WA branch had already produced two public exhibitions based upon aspects of the garden

history of the state: the first on Perth in 2011 at the Perth Town Hall and the second more specifically on the city's western suburbs in 2018 at the Cottesloe Civic Centre. The exhibition panels were professionally designed by Paul Morgan Design from material researched and written by branch members. Domestic gardens, public open spaces, commercial gardens, recreational space, gardening personalities and archaeology were covered.



We agreed the information and accompanying illustrations of the panels were the genesis of a book that would enable the information displayed at the exhibitions in Perth to be more widely appreciated. We also decided to incorporate into the book sections from *A Guide to Conserving and Interpreting Gardens in Western Australia* that we published in 2007, which covered significant WA historical periods, garden styles and plants from the periods. John Viska, Lisa Williams and Patsy Vizents, the NMC State Representative, formed an editorial subcommittee, with their first task to complete a 'mapping exercise' to ascertain where the text and accompanying illustrations of the exhibition panels would fit into the book's chapters.

The seven branch members who have contributed to the work include professional historians, horticulturists, landscape architects and cultural heritage practitioners. Each is acknowledged with a short biography. Oline Richards, a founding member of the AGHS and WA's first representative on the NMC, has written the foreword and Stuart Read, currently Co-Chair of the Society, the afterword.

The two exhibitions were the first to be solely devoted to the garden history of the state, as will be the book, which will be of value to historical researchers, heritage professionals, landscape architects and the wider public.

The publication is due for in early 2022. Email inquiries can be made to **johnviska@gmail.com**

John Viska, Chairman, WA branch

Blue Mountains Tours

Tuesday 5 to Thursday 7 April

AND

Tuesday 3 to Thursday 5 May

Blue Mountains view, 1920s Hood Collection, courtesy State Library of NSW

Stuart Read will lead two tours to Blue Mountain gardens for the AGHS. Starting from and returning to Sydney, the tours will spend three days and two nights (overnight in Katoomba) visiting a range of private and public gardens. Some were on the first AGHS tour out of Sydney in 1981, including *Everglades* at Leura, and high-Victorian *Wynstay* at Mount Wilson. They aim to give an idea of the diversity and challenges of mountain gardens.

The mountains suffered shocking fires in 2019/2020. What is remarkable is the erratic impacts and, with rains and time, the bounce-back to life. Here is a good opportunity to visit two years on, and better understand the resilience of nature and gardeners. Participants will learn something of fire-centred ecology, with eucalypts depending on it for a clear ash bed to germinate seed. The Blue Mountains is World-Heritage listed for their eucalypt diversity.

Phone the AGHS Head Office on **0419 977 703** or email **info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au** for more information. Numbers are limited to 48 people per tour. Those who booked the tours that had been planned to accompany the 2021 Sydney conference and have held their booking will receive confirmation for these rescheduled tours.

Advocacy

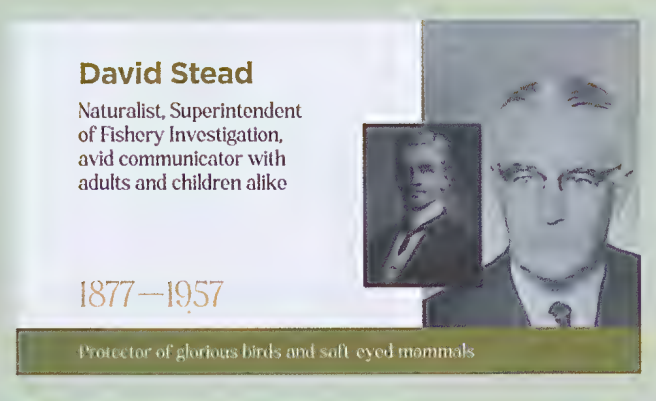
Sydney's cosmopolitan conservationists – honouring the value of their vision

At the AGHS's 2021 annual conference, Janine Kitson spoke about figures who were prominent in Sydney's 20th-century environmental movement. Here is her chronicle of eight pioneer conservationists.

Environmental historian Peggy James (*Cosmopolitan Conservationists, Greening Modern Sydney*, Australian Scholarly, 2013) describes Sydney's 1920s conservationists as 'cosmopolitan' because they participated in the international exchange of environmental ideas. They were an elite group who also pursued reforms relating to women and children, progressive education, prisons, peace, town planning and recognition of Indigenous Australians. These 'cosmopolitan conservationists' operated within influential networks in the media, government, legal circles, academia and the arts.

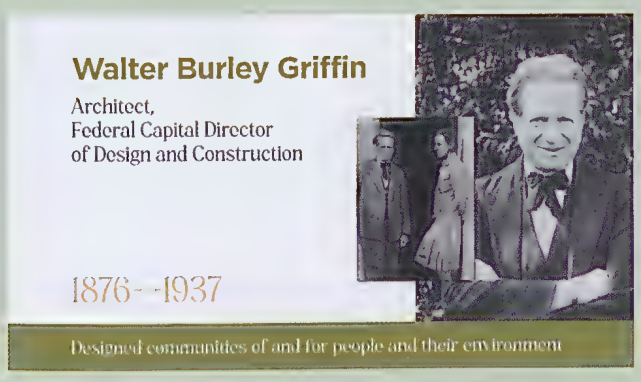
Dreams for Greater Sydney

Each had their own unique motivations for environmental protection – education, health, fitness, beauty, wildlife – but they all shared one dream: a Greater Sydney with abundant gardens, bushland, parks, playgrounds and national parks that stretched from Sydney Harbour across the Cumberland Plain to the Blue Mountains, to the Hawkesbury River and Broken Bay in the north and to the Royal National Park in the south. James' research describes how these cosmopolitan conservationists were interconnected with each other, not only through their mutual dream of a green and beautiful Sydney but through shared principles, for example about planning and civic engagement, and the organisations they belonged to.


David Stead
Naturalist, Superintendent of Fishery Investigation, avid communicator with adults and children alike
1877—1957
Protector of glorious birds and soft eyed mammals

DAVID G STEAD 1877–1957

Stead emerged from the 19th century naturalist movement to lay the foundation for wildlife protection based on strong environmental laws. In 1909 he established one of Australia's first environment protection organisations, the Wildlife Preservation Society, to stop the culling of Australia's birds for the plume fashion trade and koalas for the fur industry. Stead understood that legislation was key to protecting the environment and spent his energy building the architecture of environmental law through the post-Second World War Fauna Protection Authority (FPA), which became the precursor for the National Parks and Wildlife Service ACT of 1967. Stead was involved in many organisations such as the Aquarium, Naturalists', Linnaean and Geographical societies of NSW, the State branch of the Australian Forest League, the Town Planning Association, the Gould League of Bird Lovers, the Royal Zoological Society of NSW, the American Fisheries Society, and the Linnaean Society of London. He enthusiastically shared his fascination for the natural world in the hope that it would convince the public to protect the natural world.



WALTER BURLEY GRIFFIN 1876–1937

In 1912 Griffin, US architect and landscape architect, won the international competition to design Australia's federal capital, Canberra. His professional partnership with his wife Marion Mahoney Griffin was immense. Together they worked not only to plan Canberra as an expression of the values of democracy but also to create harmonious designs between the built and the natural environment, notably at the Sydney suburb of Castlecrag. As Glenda Korporaal pointed out in her article in the April 2021 issue of *Australian Garden History*, the couple fell in love with the Australian bush and, soon after their arrival, Mahoney joined the Naturalists' Society of New South Wales.

CHARLES BEAN 1879–1968

Bean is well known as Australia's preeminent Anzac historian who never forgot the sacrifice of 60,000 men and women who died in the First World War and the 150,000 wounded. He believed in the power of education for equality and the importance of protecting the natural environment, arguing that children's health and fitness were the key to making the nation great.

Bean dreamt of a healthy and fit post-war Australia promoted through his Parks and Playground Movement. He advocated for abundant parks, playgrounds and legislated green spaces to circle suburbs in greater Sydney.

Threats to the vision of the bush capital

The AGHS has actively campaigned in recent years to maintain the spirit of both Griffin's plan for Canberra and Bean's for the War Memorial. The lakeshore landscape in Canberra is now seen as a place for city 'renewal' with the ACT Government allowing a redevelopment that will mean loss of lakebed, erosion of the lake's symmetry, infill of parkland and restricted public access. The plan makes no provision for heritage values (which have been investigated and publicised) and neither the ACT nor federal governments has shown support for a proposed National Heritage Listing of Lake Burley Griffin, its parklands and views as part of the wider overall designed landscape of Canberra.

Charles Bean imagined the Australian War Memorial as 'a perfect, simple, solemn, exquisite building', a temple to the fallen, not a celebration of militarism. In 2018, the Federal Government committed $498m to expand the War Memorial's floor space – inter alia to allow the display of large military machines – thereby fundamentally changing the character and purpose of the building. AGHS joined many voices to object to this development. It focussed on trying to prevent significant tree removals and to preserve the landscape history of the site. Very sadly, already at least 60 trees have been removed and in November 2021, the National Capital Authority declared that it supports the redevelopment proposal, which it found was not inconsistent with the National Capital Plan.

Advocacy

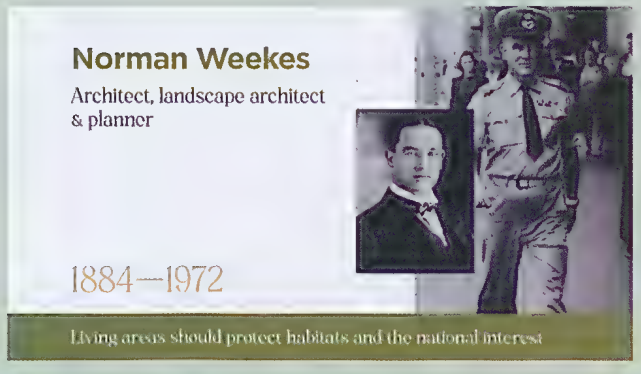
THISTLE HARRIS 1902–1990

Harris was a leading botanist and educator, and the life partner of David G Stead. Her 1938 book *Wildflowers of Australia* was transformational in promoting the study and preservation of Australian plants. Following her retirement as a botany lecturer at Sydney Teachers College and the death of her husband she worked to establish the David G Stead Memorial Wildlife Foundation of Australia. This foundation went on to establish and manage one of Australia's first environmental education centre, *Wirrimbirra*, at Bargo, south of Sydney.

Marie Byles
Conservationist, pacifist, mountaineer, bushwalker, writer, NSW's first practising female solicitor, explorer
1900—1979
Sentient beings are bound together in suffering as well as in blood

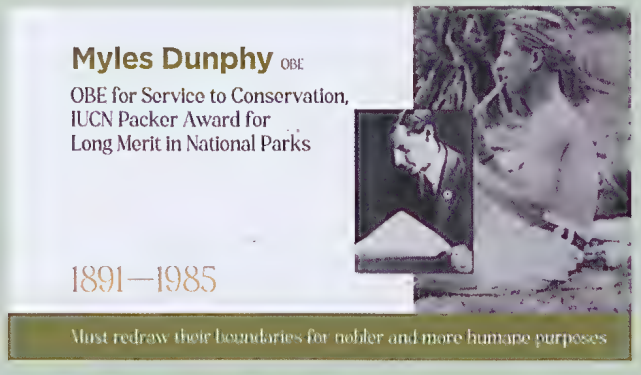
MARIE BYLES 1900–1979

Byles, mountaineer, bushwalker, traveller, writer, NSW's first practising woman solicitor and advocate for the economic equality for women, was also an influential conservationist, and a Buddhist. She worked with Paddy Palin, the well-known Sydney bushwalking equipment entrepreneur, to establish the Youth Hostels Association. Byles did pro bono legal work for many conservation groups through her successful legal practice at Eastwood. She found peace through meditation and pioneered the concept of sustainability where humans needed to tread lightly on the planet.


Norman Weekes
Architect, landscape architect & planner
1884—1972
Living areas should protect habitats and the national interest

NORMAN WEEKES 1884–1972

Weekes, engineer, architect, landscape architect and town planner is best remembered for his design of Sydney's Hyde Park with its magnificent avenue of fig trees, remarked upon favourably by the Australian Forest League, which promoted the preservation and use of Australian forests and trees. Weekes saw the merit in good planning. His had input into the 1951 amendments to the Local Government Act that gave legal effect to the Cumberland planning scheme for a ring of green belts around the Greater Sydney region . His experiences during the Second World War (the Japanese held him in prisoner-of war camps in Java and elsewhere for three and a half years), led to his involvement in the development of Buddhism in New South Wales.


Myles Dunphy OBE
OBE for Service to Conservation, IUCN Packer Award for Long Merit in National Parks
1891—1985
Must redraw their boundaries for nobler and more humane purposes

MYLES DUNPHY 1891–1985

An intrepid bushwalker, Dunphy led the way in putting forward proposals for national parks and wilderness areas. He taught architecture at Sydney Technical College and was someone who loved escaping into the bush as an antidote from claustrophobic pressures of office work. Dunphy's dream for the protection of Greater Sydney's wilderness areas was realised when he secured the Blue Mountains National Park. Fifteen years after his death, in 2000, the Greater Blue Mountains National Park was World Heritage listed in 2000.

Annie Wyatt OBE
Founder of the National Trust, heritage protector,
Founder of Ku-ring-gai Tree Lovers Civic League
Prevented jackhammers turning Sydney's history to dust

ANNIE WYATT, 1885–1961

Wyatt was the founder of the Ku-ring-gai Tree Lover's Civic League that became a force across Sydney, calling for tree protection. She described herself as 'an ardent tree lover' and was committed to stopping what she described as the 'jackhammers turning Sydney's history to dust'. In 1945 she established Australia's first National Trust (NSW) in the hope that it would protect places of beauty for perpetuity. Her son Ivor followed her dream and became a president of the National Trust. He secured the protection of Byles home *Ahimsa* and *Wirrimbirra*. In 1965 the Stead Foundation gifted the *Wirrimbirra* land to the National Trust (NSW) so that it would be safe for perpetuity. For the next 50 years, the Foundation leased back, managed and financed *Wirrimbirra*. In October 2019 the National Trust terminated the Foundation's lease and transferred it to the Australian Wildlife Sanctuary, thus severing the connection with Thistle's dream of a working legacy for her husband.

Nightmares

The flip side to dreams are nightmares and these conservationists had many. They feared for the survival of Australia's unique wildlife and plants, its forests, its historic buildings and its Aboriginal heritage. They opposed the construction, beginning in 1953, of the Caltex oil refinery at Kurnell, Botany Bay but lost that battle. They feared that the post-Second World War mantra of 'progress' and 'growth' would decimate the beauty and fragility of the natural world with dire consequences for the future. Today we are living through their prescient warnings of a degraded world.

Why is their vision so important?

The relational biographies of these 20th-century Sydney conservationists reveal how today's environmental crisis is a history of cumulative failure to heed their warnings. Despite this, they inspire many to continue their conservation work. Some of their legacies of protected national park and urban spaces remain with us today. Their dream of greening Sydney has never been more important in this age of climate crisis and biodiversity extinction.

AGHS's advocacy work

From its inception, the Australian Garden History Society set out to be a conservationist group, concerned for the protection and good care of Australia's historic gardens to ensure their future.

Forty years on, we have 'jumped the garden fence' expanding our concern for and interest in landscapes which might be designed such as a city park or streetscape, evolving such as orcharding or grazing farmland or cultural such as Uluru – Kata-Tjuta / Ayers Rock and the Olgas having been actively managed by Anangu Aboriginal people for millennia.

We advocate to see the best conservation practices applied to gardens and landscapes as an equal 'type' of heritage, to buildings, archaeology or museum or gallery artefacts and strongly encourage the use of industry standards and best-practice guidelines, such as the **Australia ICOMOS *Burra Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*.**

For examples of current advocacy work that AGHS is involved in see **Garden History Now – Advocacy** and the Society's branch newsletters, also published on the website.

The AGHS also maintains a 'Landscapes at Risk' register. The criteria for 'at risk' are as follows:

- active current threat (development approved/ lack of heritage listing or consideration of landscape heritage, lack of protection during development)
- potential future threat (development, neglect, poor management)
- lack of champions (community protest, unaware, Council/manager uninterested).

Janine Kitson is a Sydney-based environmental educator and activist, working on projects and campaigns that had their beginnings with the dreams of these Sydney cosmopolitan conservationists. She has served as the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Deputy Chair, National Parks Association of NSW Vice-President, National Trust (NSW) director and Ku-ring-gai Councillor.

INAUGURAL AGHS PHOTO COMPETITION

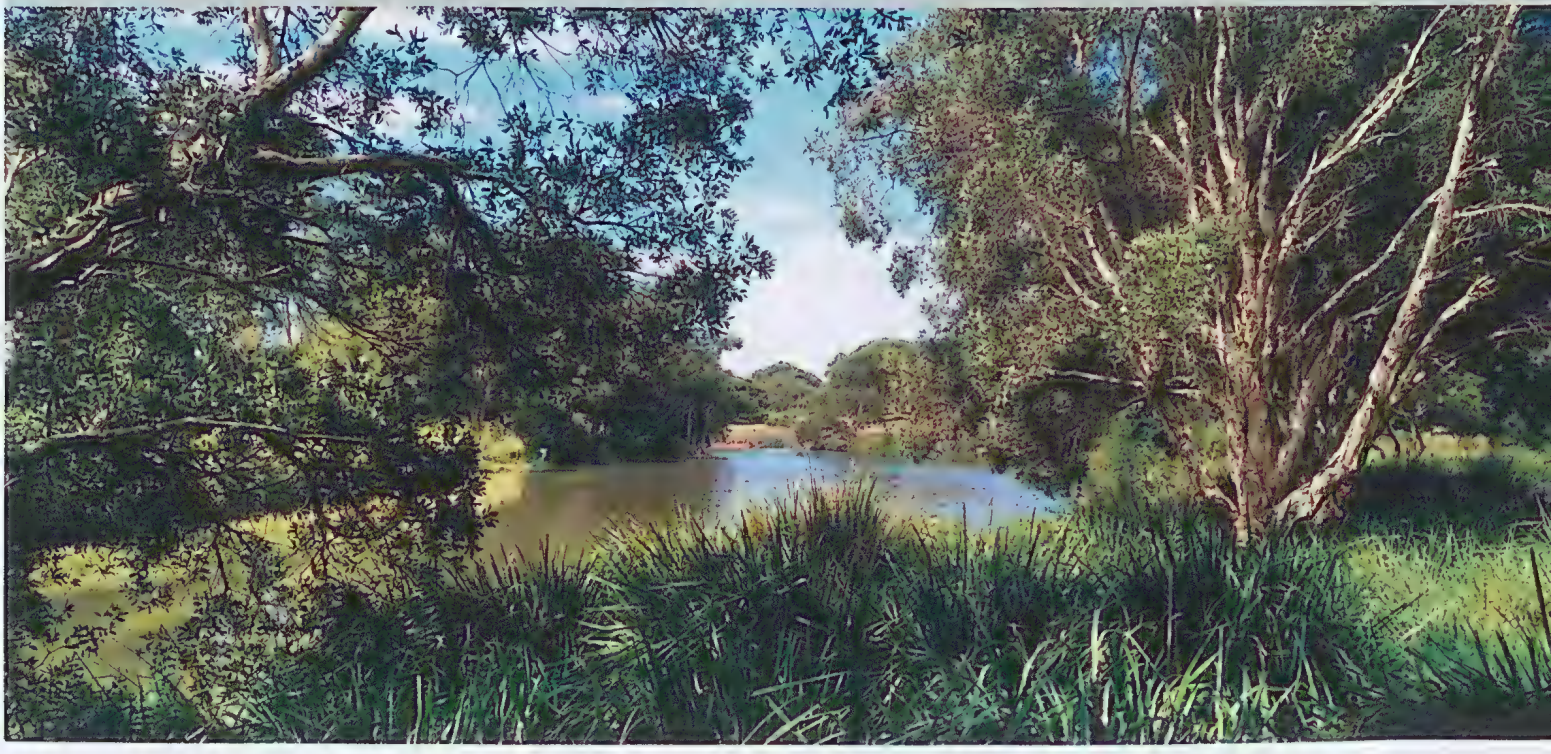
The brainchild of Greg Johnson (AGHS ACT and Monaro) and Helen Page (AGHS Vic), the competition was part of the celebrations of the Society's 40th anniversary. The judges were Dr Victoria Cooper, Lucy Culliton, Trisha Dixon Burkitt and Dr Doug Spowart. The full report can be found on the AGHS website.

The winner of each category received an Australian-made gardening tool and the overall winner an additional prize of $500. Prizes were sponsored by the AGHS ACT Riverina Monaro and Southern Highlands branches, as well as individual members. Winning and runner-up photographs feature on the front cover of this issue and on this page.

Left Neva Kastselic's composite photograph, a modern take on Robert John Thornton's image of tulips published in *The Temple of Flora* (1807) was the winner of Category E – Garden History Imagined

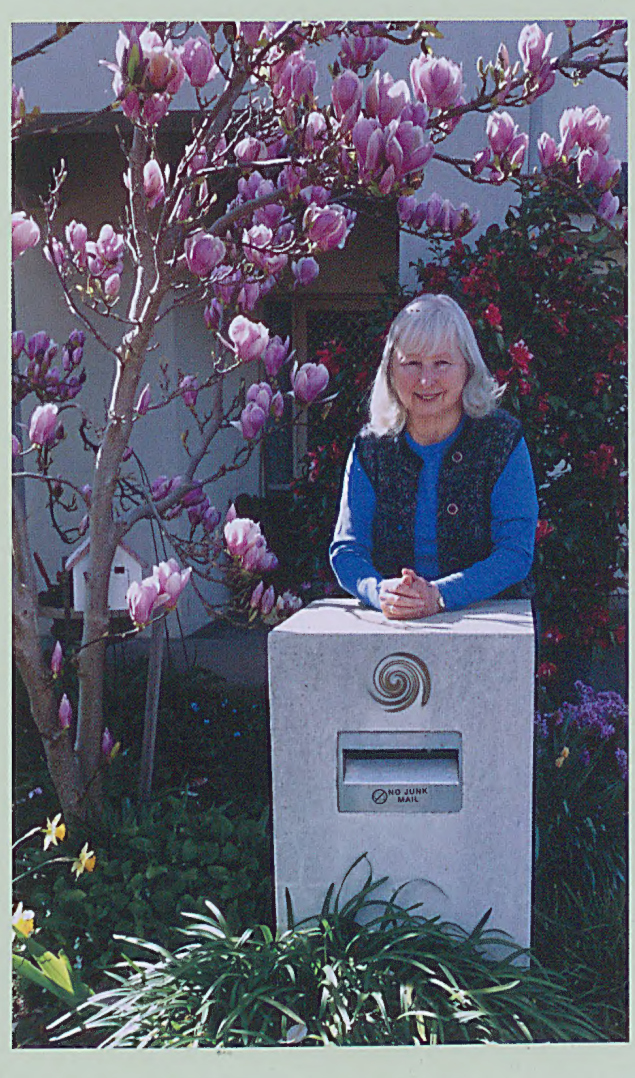
Stuart Read was the winner of Category A – Garden view or Cultural Landscape. The landscape depicted is in Sydney's Centennial Park. While appearing like natural Bidjigal Country, it is in fact the 19th-century creation of English engineer Frederick Augustus Franklin, Botanic Gardens Director, Irishman Charles Moore and Overseer of the Sydney Domains, James Jones. It's completely 'faked up' nature.

Faking Nature around Lachlan Pond in Sydney's Centennial Park, early autumn, image Stuart Read, Elizabeth Bay, Sydney



Overall first prize was awarded to **Maggie McCredie** (left) from Jindabyne in NSW. Maggie also won first prize in the lawn category of the competition. The judges loved the joy and madness of *The Lawn Ranger comes to Granny's rescue!*

Maggie used her Samsung Galaxy to capture the image of her grandson larking around with the lawn mower at their property in Jindabyne. She just kept clicking away, so was able to capture Connor mid-air in one frame. Maggie is a keen Instagrammer. She started posting images of her garden to show its progress to her friends and family, and really appreciates the record of change she has created. Now she follows Instagrammers from all around the world, getting a daily glimpse at the seasons in Ireland and Sweden or elsewhere in the northern hemisphere, as well as learning from other gardeners – most of whom she's never met in person – around Australia.



Overall runner-up and winner of the Gardener under COVID-19 category was **Neva Kastelic** (left) from Gungahlin in Canberra. She has always loved gardens and flowers and they are the first things she sees in paintings, books, film and photographs. Nevertheless, she found the themes of the AGHS photo competition helped her think more deeply about the importance of gardens in our lives.

Neva rates her practical gardening skills as adequate, and while she says she might never create a wonderful garden, she's dreamed up many! Like many retired Canberrans, she appreciates the treasures of Ngunnawal land – including the Australian National Botanic Gardens and the natural and cultivated beauty of the garden city.

Throughout 2021, each day Neva and a Braidwood friend exchanged a photo and their version of haiku. Neva says this was a great way to maintain connection during the lockdowns and to prompt her to see the natural world. This poem accompanied the image of her mother in the garden:

A lockdown Sunday –
scent drifting, and memories
a bee nearby

Inside view

While it isn't the same in each state or territory, the end of lockdowns and re-opening state borders mean many members are re-discovering, timidly perhaps, the delights of being able to get together, and visit favourite spots beyond our suburbs.

The past two years have brought into focus how plants, gardens, local parks and reserves offer relief from daily routine (especially during lockdowns), a place for exercise and stimulation, as well as a gentle reminder of life's cycle. Let's keep spreading the word about the benefits of gardens, however big or small.

Without doubt, our expansion beyond the physical into the digital realm, necessitated by COVID-19, has been a big positive for AGHS. We have learned how to share ideas, concerns and advocacy issues online, and even to enjoy virtual events. We look forward to continuing skilling up and using this new tool as an active part of our operations this year. And the next. As many members have observed to us, technology has enabled us to keep in touch, widen our reach.

The Society has a new Climate Change Advisory Group, which was established in response to the 2020 survey of members. Under the leadership of our Patron, Tim Entwistle, this group has been charged with formulating the Society's response to climate change, including drafting a position statement and developing a responsive 'tool kit', which reflects our mission to research, advocate, educate, manage and mitigate environmental damage. What can we, as gardeners, do to help adapt to a warming climate? How can the Society find ways to lead community actions?

As we launch into what we hope will be a much simpler year, we can anticipate a wonderful array of regional and national events. These include our Hobart conference, two tours in the Blue Mountains, another to the Central and Northern Tablelands of New South Wales in the autumn, and pre- and post-conference tours that will bookend our conference in November in Tasmania.

As always, we thank all our hard-working national and branch committee members and all our members for your passion, time and interest. Welcome on board to all new committee members. We look forward to working with you throughout 2022.

Warm regards
Stuart Read and Bronwyn Blake, Co-Chairs

AGHS has a new branch representing Northern NSW

On 13 March 2005, a small group of people gathered on the verandah of *Salisbury Court* in Uralla in northern NSW and talked about creating a local outpost of the Australian Garden History Society – this while enjoying one of the longest established European-style gardens in the New England. The group became a sub-branch of the Sydney and Northern New South Wales branch of the Society.

After some early garden tours and associated research, the fledging group grew confident enough to host the AGHS's national conference in Armidale in 2013. This was an outstanding financial success, providing further resources to allow the sub-branch to negotiate agreements to accept the donation of a significant local rose collection and to create a heritage rose garden on a National Trust site, Saumarez Homestead. This type of collaboration was a national first.

In November 2021, the group became a full branch of the Australian Garden History Society, with a delegate on the National Management Committee. This step recognises countless hours of volunteer labour, which has project managed over $150,000 of investment. Not bad for a group wishing to promote the preservation and enjoyment of heritage gardens in this challenging climate!

Bill Oates
Chair

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
RBG00024655

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Student	$30	

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Jennifer Stackhouse
Lynne Walker

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Bronwyn Blake and Stuart Read (Co-Chairs)
Lynne Walker (Secretary)
Stephen Hathway (Treasurer)
John Maurer (Public Officer)
Annabel Murray
Lynne Paul

Branch representatives on National Management Committee

ACT	Anne Claoue-Long
Northern NSW	To be confirmed
Qld	Ann Wegener
SA	Dr Patricia Michell
Southern Highlands	Lyn Barrett
Sydney	Steven Halliday
TAS	Prue Slatyer
VIC	Anna Long
WA	Patsy Vizents

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Glenrock Station, photo courtesy of ASA Tours

Join Lynne Walker, AGHS Northern NSW branch, on a tour especially designed for AGHS members that will explore a diverse range of private gardens in the Hunter Valley and New England. For more information go to **ASA Cultural Tours** **www.asatours.com.au**

AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

The Australian Garden History Society is a history and heritage partner of the Australian Museum of Gardening.

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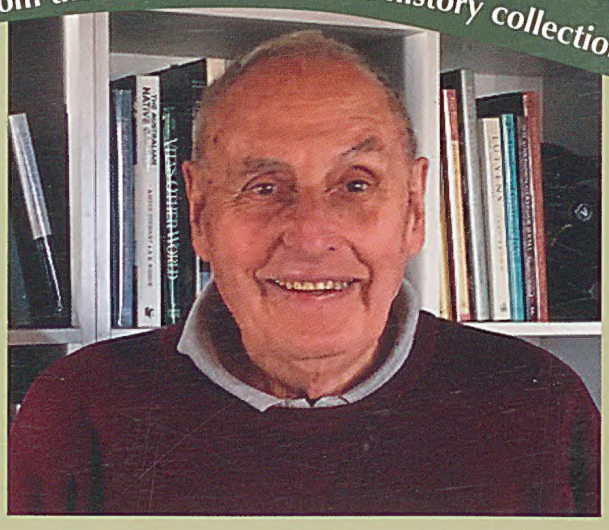
The views expressed in this journal are those of the contributors and are not necessarily shared by the Australian Garden History Society.

Getting to know them

stories from the AGHS national oral history collection



A beloved figure in gardening circles in Canberra and beyond, **Cedric Bryant** (born 10 July 1939 in England) died in Canberra on 4 October 2021.

You spoke about your father's approach to education and leaving school at 14, did he expect that you would leave school at that stage too?

He said to my mother, 'Well if you want to educate the boy, you pay for it.' And so my mother paid for my education, and for my sister, both going to private schools, [by selling] eggs.

I left school in December 1956 and was on the boat to Australia in February '57…There was a movement called the Big Brother movement, which sounds like something out of 1984, but…was set up for young people that wanted to come to Australia…They found a job for me as a jackaroo…at Gunnedah in northwestern New South Wales. [After 18 months Cedric moved into town and got a job at the coop store, which became the first Australian distributor of PortaGas bottled gas.]

How long did you stay [in Gunnedah]?

[In 1965] I married Gerdina...we moved down to Sydney to PortaGas head office. I joined Esso in 1968... I was there [mainly in Canberra] for the next 13 years putting gas into people's homes…At the same time I had a hobby growing fuchsias. [The hobby] grew and grew...I used to have our own little magazine I'd turn out…It was basically a hobby, but it was bringing in money. Esso decided, quite unexpectedly, to pull out of Australia…and said to me, 'Okay, well you don't have a job.'…just before that we'd been looking to…buy some land to start a nursery…In the evening, I was studying at the School of Horticulture in Canberra.

This is the late 70s?

It was the time of the advent of permaculture. We found this place in Yass, two and a half acres. Historic old buildings, the old coach house and stables, with the hayloft up the top, built in 1880. The house was built in 1919. It was an old orchard...We started a nursery [Bryant's Nursery and the Herb Gardens of Aberlour]. Gerdina had been mad on herbs for a long time.

So, between '79 to '85, in that short period of time, you'd established a nursery that was award winning?

Yes…Because of the family in England, we would go over there occasionally…Looking around at various things, and also [at] who were good garden designers. The name kept on cropping up of John Brookes, MBE…He introduced a new scheme of gardening, bringing the outdoors in and the indoors out…I called him up and said…'how do I get into one of your garden classes.' Very select…Very intensive. They said, 'We're booked up for the next two or three years, but we can put you on a waiting list.' And a few weeks later they rang me and said, 'Look, we've had somebody drop out of the course that's going to start in about a fortnight's time.' I said, 'Right, I will be there.' So I took off to England, and studied under John Brookes...He gave me the entrée into a new business and a new way of life which lasted from 1988, when I went to his course, up until July 2018.

[In 1988 the Bryants sold the nursery when the recession hit.]

I saw the need for a garden designer in Canberra... I [then became] involved in restoring some gardens, historic gardens, at Duntroon Military College...and the National Film and Sound Archive.

I wanted to return to your garden writing

I was writing for *The Canberra Times* from 1986 to 2011 until…the [new] editor said, 'Oh, Cedric, have you got a minute?' and I said, 'Yes'…He said, 'I'm into change… you've been here what? 23 years, so I'm going to terminate you today.' I said, 'So you're not happy with the garden page?' He said, 'Oh no, I explained to you, I'm into change.' [Cedric moved to *Canberra City News*]

Has your work contributed to the awareness of gardens and gardening in Canberra?

Everything I have to do with gardening, hopefully it's contributed. But also garden clubs and societies play an important role…[as] a social thing as well as just straight gardening.

The full interview, which contains many insights into the world of nursery management, organic gardening and garden design, was conducted by Roslyn Burge in 2019. It is part of AGHS's national oral history collection and is accessible as a transcript and recording at: **https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/publications/cedric-bryant/**

AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

The Australian Garden History Society promotes awareness and conservation of significant gardens and cultural landscapes through engagement, research, advocacy and activities.

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